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Your Opinion

Mutual trust is key

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the chorus of American supporters and opponents of the Soviet-U.S. Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty has been joined by your newspaper, which published an editorial "SALT II: Trust is the Key." The thing that surprised me was the discrepancy between its title and the content. The writer, seemingly admitting that mutual trust between the USSR and the USA is essential for implementing a new treaty, does everything to undermine his readers' confidence in the Soviet Union's policy.

The first charge leveled against the Soviet Union is that it is supposedly violating the accords reached in Helsinki. In our country, the article leads us to believe people are put into jail for "publicly expressing unpopular opinions." Facts? There is only an unsubstantiated statement totally contradicting the actual state of affairs, which is that punishment in the USSR is meted out not for expressing "unpopular" opinions, but for criminal activities.

I stress, activities, those directed against the political and social system of the USSR. I do not doubt that the writer could cite a dozen names of those sentenced under Soviet laws. But in each case, to be objective, the newspaper would have to admit that they received punishment not for their convictions, but for their antigovernment activities.

For justice's sake, however, it should be said that the author of the article recalled several examples of what he modestly called the "duplicity" of U.S. foreign policy, mentioning the U.S. aggression against Cuba in 1961, CIA actions in plotting against Fidel Castro and U-2 intelligence flights over Soviet territory. This is the topic which, I think, he should pursue by extending the list of well-known violations by the United States of international legal standards and saying honestly that such facts did take place and that they can justifiably cause Soviet people to have doubts about the U.S. ability to observe international commitments.

The view in the USSR, however, is that international treaties are not concluded to be violated. It is believed that common sense, which dictates the need for signing and ratifying a SALT II treaty between our countries, will triumph. It is believed in the Soviet Union that mutual trust is indeed the key to implementing the new treaty. But is such trust promoted by attempts to discredit the partner in the treaty? The answer to this question has to be left on the conscience of all those who, at this crucial moment, are trying to put in a bad light the important understanding reached between the USSR and the United States of America.

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